

## OUR HOME TOWN.

A Department Devoted to Village Betterment.  
RICHARD HAMILTON BYRD.

The editor of this department desires to keep in touch with the active members of Civic and Local Improvement associations, and every one interested in the improvement and the protection of rural village life.

What is being done in your town to encourage small industries and for home employment? What is being done along the line of street improvement and the beautifying of private lawns and public parks?

Are your local merchants receiving the support of the local trade? Experience, plans and suggestions will be welcomed by the editor of this department and so far as possible given place in these columns.

### THE INDEPENDENT TOWN.

#### Make Each Rural Center Dependent Upon Itself and Its Own Resources.

There has lately developed a strong sentiment looking to the improvement of the home town—making each community, as much as possible, dependent upon itself and its own resources. Those of its surrounding country, and independent of the great centres which are constantly striving to secure a portion of the local wealth. This local self-sufficiency may be fostered by an individual and co-operative determination to bring the town up to its highest possible plane of comfort, general usefulness and beauty to its residents. This may be described as a movement for civic improvement. The accumulation of considerable wealth in many American villages and towns, during the last ten or twenty years, the development of popular education and the increase of leisure, has given an opportunity for the performance of public duties, such as had not seemed to exist to the young man or woman of the former generation, who, in the effort to secure a livelihood and establish a home had given little thought to the duties of citizenship and social responsibilities.

It is only within a comparatively few years that "nature study" has entered into any of the public-school work, or even manual training, while there are many who yet think that such institutions as gymnasiums, baths, playgrounds, and even vacation schools and free lectures are unnecessary time-consumers for the young.

Nevertheless the general movement for a better education along rural lines and for backyard and street improvement, and the general betterment of the village and town is rapidly increasing.

As an instance of this, even in such a large city as St. Louis, girls and boys are given practical instruction in gardening, through the Junior School of Horticulture of the Missouri Botanical Gardens. The children are permitted to sell their own products—a decided stimulus to their efforts—and in this way many of them earn considerable pocket money for vacation time. This school has been in operation for a number of years and is of great value to the citizens as well as to the children of the city, the latter of whom would otherwise know practically nothing of nature as country children know it.

Even in Texas the school garden and town improvement idea has made headway, although there has been greater difficulty in obtaining popular approval and support, possibly, than in any other section of the country, owing to the fact, perhaps, that the Lone Star State has vast areas of uncultivated land, and to the fact that the influential majority has been but a short time removed from the cattle

### THE AGRICULTURAL HIGHSCHOOL.

#### Successful Examples Described by Crosby of Department of Agriculture of Local Improvement Through Rural Education

In the new Year Book of the Department of Agriculture, just issued, is a description by D. J. Crosby, of the office of Experiment Stations, which shows, in a number of instances, what splendid results are being attained through the introduction of common sense agricultural studies in some of the country village schools, and how they directly affect and benefit their home towns. There is what appears to be, an almost ideal Pennsylvania village high school, which the writer visited. He describes what he saw:

In Erie County, Pa., surrounded by a good general farming and dairy country, is the village of Waterford, on the outskirts of which is the site of Fort Le Boeuf, of French and Indian war fame. At Waterford the first school in Erie County was established. In 1800, and here as far back as 1822 was erected a stone academy building, which is used to-day as the main part of the high-school building. The township of Waterford has a population of 1,400 and about one half reside in the borough of Waterford. The borough has its own elementary school, but the high school is supported and controlled jointly by the borough and township.

This high school, with its three teachers and three courses of study (language, scientific, and agricultural), has an enrollment of 80 pupils, and 35 of these are in the agricultural course. This course includes agriculture, five hours a week for four years. The work of the first year is devoted to a study of plant life—germination, plant growth, plant food, reproduction, propagation, transplanting, pruning, and use of plants; the second year to a study of field, orchard, and garden crops; the third year to domestic animals, dairying, and soil physics, a-1 the fourth year to the chemistry of soils and of plant and animal life. Text books are used in the classrooms; a small library of agricultural reference books, reports and bulletins of this Department and experiment stations, and agricultural papers contributed by the publishers is in almost constant use, and lectures on agricultural subjects are given before the class and before the whole school by the instructor in agriculture, who is an agricultural college graduate. But the feature of instruction which chiefly distinguishes this agricultural course from the ordinary high school course is the prominence given to the laboratory work and the outdoor practice. For the laboratory work there is no elaborate apparatus. The pupils make much of their own apparatus, furnish their own reagent bottles, and, moreover use them. In the plant-life course the pupils study not elaborate and carefully prepared drawings, but

It had been organized only three or four weeks, and yet the interest manifested and the readiness with which the boys and girls described the beef type, the dairy type, and various breeds of cattle, the mutton and wool types of sheep, the principal breeds of draft horses, and some of the standard-bred roasters and trotters, were indeed surprising. At the close of the recitation the class was taken to a barn in the village where a few fine roasters were owned. The owner was not at home, but the teacher had standing permission to take the horses from the barn in order that the class might examine them. A fine Hambletonian mare was led into the yard and examined critically by the pupils and criticised by them, the different points being brought out by skillful questioning on the part of the teacher.

From this place the class went to a lively barn where a splendid black Percheron stallion was stabled for the day. A member of the class had discovered the horse as he was being driven in from another town 14 miles away, and following the driver to the barn had got permission for the class to examine him. When the lively barn was reached the driver brought his stallion out into the street, put him through his paces, and helped the teacher in calling attention to his good points and the contrasts between the draft type and the roaster type of horses, and allowed us to take several photographs. It was an instructive lesson not only for the members of the agricultural class, but for the score or more of farmers and townsmen who collected around the lively stable. In much the same way the local butcher is the instructor in the high school. The class studying the beef type of cattle, or the mutton sheep, or the different classes of swine is taken to the butcher shop and given a demonstration lesson on cuts and their relative values, which of the breeds are apt to produce the better cuts, which the better quality, and so on.

Thus this little village high school, though it pays only \$2,230 a year in salaries and only \$370 for other expenses, has a faculty made up of numerous specialists and an equipment in illustrative material such as few technical high schools could afford. And the pupils are being trained in the "elements of failure and success," not only on "all the farms of the neighborhood," but in the village shops and markets. This is training for efficiency. It is training for culture, for breadth of view, and for sympathy with all that goes to make up the life of the community.

This is good, healthful optimism. There never was a time when opportunities of all shapes, sizes and colors bobbed up on every corner as they do to-day. And they are not confined to any particular country or locality. They are waiting everywhere. Under the rapidly changing industrial and economic conditions they are springing up in odd and out-of-the-way places. Old settlements—old villages, moss-grown and for years silent as the cemetery that clings to their skirts, are finding new youth in the revival of occupations and simple industries which twenty years ago were deemed impossible. The abandoned farms of New England—the farms that were left tenanted because it was thought that the only opportunities for success were to be found in the West—are receiving new leases of life.

PENDULUM IS SWINGING BACK. For a full half century the American people have been money-mad. Every thing has been sacrificed to the one idea of accumulation. The dollar sign became the sole badge of honor, and a man's success was measured not by what he made of himself, not by what he accomplished for his fellows or the world at large, but by the size of his pile.

This standard of success has warped the imagination of the whole people. The merchant and professional man bend every energy to the piling up of gold bricks. And the farmer, thinking how he may get more land, but the land has been seized him and home comforts and a quiet life are sold in the market in order that the influence may be removed.

This has been the condition for many years, and it requires careful observation to detect any change. But a reaction has set in. The pendulum is swinging back. A growing sentiment in favor of a moderate success, a quiet life and home surroundings is apparent. With this comes a desire to get back to original principles; to abandon the cities and seek the healthful life of the farm and the village.

The growth of our cities has been abnormal—the direct result of "normal transportation conditions. To him that hath shall be given, and to him that hath not even that which he hath shall be taken away," has been the working policy of modern commercial transportation companies. The small town has been sacrificed to the city. This was the natural result of competition. In centers where numerous railroads meet, low rates are given to both the in-going and out-going freight, but where there is but one road, the traffic is taxed all that it will bear. This condition has had a

Every public-minded citizen should make it known that he is absolutely opposed to partisan, political control in the management of public parks, roadside improvement, playgrounds and like town betterments. Nothing can be more detrimental to such development than the interference of politics. Party responsibility, as a remedy for municipal mismanagement, has been proved a "delusion and a snare." Such methods have raised to important places bigoted, incompetent and sometimes dishonest men, who, by reason of their weaknesses or mismanagement, have disgraced what should be honorable and respected positions. Our citizens should insist absolutely that no political considerations be allowed to interfere with park affairs, and should visit with marked constancy and disapproval all city officials who prostitute their trusts for mere political gain.

Fresh Air Playgrounds. American cities are far behind European cities in making provision for public parks, especially in providing for the instruction and amusement of children in them. In modern municipal equipment in Europe, much provision is made for the instruction and amusement of children, and in most modernized European cities large sums of money have been expended in procuring open spaces for them in districts of congested population.

## OPPORTUNITIES AT HOME.

### PERNICIOUS PHILOSOPHY OF JOHN J. INGALLS' FAMOUS POEM.—HOW HOME OPPORTUNITIES HAVE BEEN OVERLOOKED.

Solution of the Labor Question to be Found in the Development of Home Industries.

Many a beautiful thing is pernicious in its effect. There is no telling how many men have given up a good fighting chance and have literally laid down in harness because they had absorbed from John J. Ingalls' poem OPPORTUNITY the idea that they had had their chance, and that for them at least opportunity would not return. Here is the poem:

"Master of human destinies am I,  
Fame, love and fortune on my footsteps wait.  
Cities and fields I walk. I penetrate  
Deserts and seas remote. And passing by  
Hovel and mart and palace, soon or late  
I knock unbidden o'ce at every gate.  
If sleeping wake; if feasting rise before  
I turn away; it is the hour of fate.  
And those who follow me reach every state  
Mortals desire and conquer every  
every foe  
Save death; but those who doubt or hesitate,  
Condemned to failure, penury and woe,  
Seek me in vain, and uselessly implore;  
I answer not, and I return no more."  
A beautiful poem—yes, but pernicious as is the theory of fate or the twin tenet of predestination. If opportunity comes but once, where is the use of striving?  
President James of the University of Illinois during the recent commencement exercises took occasion to refer to the philosophy of Ingalls' famous poem. "It is false and misleading," said Mr. James. "It is not a single opportunity which comes to a man; it is a train. It is a never-ending procession, some small, some large, growing perhaps more small and more insignificant as the years flow on, but ever and always opportunities too numerous, too great, and too large for us to utilize fully."



WATERFORD HIGH SCHOOL CLASS JUDGING A HAMBLETONIAN MARE

## BE A HOMECROFTER

Learn by Doing. Work Together.  
Give every Man a Chance.

THE SLOGAN OF THE HOMECROFTERS IS  
"Learn by Doing—Work Together—Give Every Man a Chance."  
"Every Child in a Garden—Every Mother in a Homecroft, and Individual, Industrial Independence for Every Worker in a Home of his Own on the Land."

"A little croft we owned—a plot of corn,  
A garden strewed with peas and mint and thyme,  
And flowers for posies, cut on Sunday morn,  
Plucked while the church bells rang their earliest chimes."  
—Hordsworth.

"The Citizen standing in the doorway of his home—contented on his threshold, his family gathered about his hearthstone, while the evening of a still spent day glazes in scenes and sounds that are dearer—he shall spare the Republic when the drum-tap is futile and the barracks are exhausted."  
—Henry W. Grady.



## THE FIRST BOOK OF THE HOMECROFTERS

HAS JUST BEEN PUBLISHED AND AMONG ITS CONTENTS ARE THE FOLLOWING ARTICLES OF ABSORBING INTEREST

*The Brotherhood of Man*  
*Charity that is Everlasting*  
*The Secret of Nippon's Power*  
*Lesson of a Great Calamity*  
*The Sign of a Thought*

Copies of "THE FIRST BOOK OF THE HOMECROFTERS" can be obtained by sending twelve two-cent stamps with your name and address (carefully and plainly written) to The Homecrofters' Guild of the Tailman, 143 Main St., Watertown, Mass.

This book is the first of a Series that will chronicle the progress of the HOME-CROFT MOVEMENT and inform all who wish to co-operate with it how they may do so through the formation of local Homecrofters' Circles, Clubs or Guilds to promote Town and Village Betterment, stimulate home civic pride and loyalty to home institutions, industries and trade, improve methods and facilities of education in the local public schools, and create new opportunities "At Home" that will go far to check the drift of trade and population to the cities.

The first Guild of the Homecrofters has been established at Watertown, Massachusetts. The Guildhall, Shops and Gardens are located at 143 Main Street, where the Garden School is now fully organized and over one hundred children are at work in the Gardens. The departments for training in Homecraft and Village Industries are already at work at the looms.

It is not designed to build here an isolated institution, but to make a model which can be duplicated in any town or village in the country. There is New Hope and Inspiration for every Worker who wants a Home of his own on the Land in the CREED AND PLATFORM OF THE HOMECROFTERS' which is as follows:

"Peace has her victories no less renowned than war."  
**EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY HOMECROFTS**

We believe that the Patriotic Slogan of the Whole People of this Nation should be "Every Child in a Garden—Every Mother in a Homecroft—and Individual Industrial Independence for Every Worker in a Home of his Own on the Land," and that until he owns such a Home, the concentrated purpose and chief inspiration to labor in the life of every wage worker should be his determination to "Get an Acre and Live on it."

We believe that the Slums and Tenements and Congested Centers of Population in the Cities are a savagely deteriorating social, moral and political influence, and that a great public movement should be organized, and the whole power of the nation and the states exerted for the betterment of all the conditions of Rural Life, and to create and uphold Centers of Social and Civic Life in Country and Suburban Towns and Villages, where Trade and Industry can be so firmly anchored that they cannot be drawn into the Commercial Maelstrom that is now steadily sucking Industry and Humanity into the Vortex of the Great Cities.

We believe that every Citizen in this Country has an inherent and Fundamental Right to an Education which will train him to Earn a Living, and if need be, to get his living straight from Mother Earth; and that he has the same right to the Opportunity to have the Work to Do which will afford him that living, and to earn not only a comfortable livelihood, but enough more to enable him to be a Homecrofter and to have a Home of his Own, with ground around it sufficient to yield him and his family a Living from the Land as the reward for his own labor.

We believe that the Public Domain is the most precious heritage of the people, and the surest safeguard the nation has against Social Unrest, Disturbance or Upheaval, and that the Cause of Humanity and the Preservation of Social Stability and of our Free Institutions demand that the absorption of the public lands into speculative private ownership, without settlement, be forthwith stopped; and that the nation should create opportunities for Homecrofters by building irrigation and drainage works to reclaim land as fast as it is needed to give every man who wants a Home on the Land a chance to get it.

We believe that, as a Nation, we should be less absorbed with Making Money, and should pay more heed to raising up and training Men who will be Law-Abiding Citizens; that the welfare of our Workers is of more consequence than the mere accumulation of Wealth; and that Stability of National Character and of Social and Business Conditions is of greater importance to the people of this country as a whole than any other one question that is now before them; and we believe that the only way to Preserve such Stability, and to Permanently Maintain our National Prosperity, is to carry into immediate effect and



CLASS IN LIVE STOCK JUDGING CATTLE AND PLANTLIFE at Waterford, Pa., High School.

range business. However, the more centralized portion of society has taken the matter up, and it is stated that the most public-spirited citizens of the towns and cities, together with the progressive teachers have made school gardens and rural education a success during the past two seasons and have aroused such enthusiasm among the pupils, that wherever it has been tried, the school garden has become a fixture.

"Let your child plant his own garden, gather his own harvest of fruit and flowers, learn through his own small experience something of the influence of the sun, dew and rain, and gain thereby a remote presentment of the reciprocal energies of nature and a reverent feeling for the divine life and law expressed in nature. The child is a plant, a vegetable, and must live out of doors, or nearly so, as conditions will permit." Froebel realized that health was the basis and test of all our energies, and that this was one of the morning stars of the new hygiene.

the plants themselves with reference to their life history and economic uses. For the outdoor practicum the school is unfortunate in having neither land nor domestic animals nor fowls, and yet it has a wealth of illustrative material all around it. Every good farm within a radius of 3 or 4 miles, nearly every barn and poultry yard in the village, the butcher shops, and the farm implement stores furnish costly illustrative material and extend vastly the teaching force of the high school. The farmers and owners of good live stock either bring their animals to the door of the school house to be studied by the class in agriculture or allow the class to go to their barns and fields for this purpose. It is said to be a rare thing for a good horse to come to the village and get away without being examined by the high school class in agriculture.

The writer was fortunate in being the guest of the school one day last October and in having an opportunity to listen to some of the recitations in agriculture. A class of 14 boys and 6 girls were studying animal industry,